DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 226 448 EA 015 376

AUTHOR Lennon, Gale G.; Johnson, Merton
TITLE A Guide for the Internal Review of Your School Management System: A Component of the District Office Self Assessment and External Review System (DOSAERS) [and] A Guide for the External Review of Your School Management System: A Component of the District Office Self Assessment and External Review System (DOSAERS).
PUB DATE 81
NOTE 18p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of School Administrators (114th, New Orleans, LA, February 26-March 1, 1982). For a related document, see EA 015 375.
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Guides; Committees; Elementary Secondary Education; *Evaluation Methods; *Guidelines; *Management Development; *Organizational Effectiveness; Organizational Objectives; *School Districts; *Self Evaluation (Groups); Task Analysis

ABSTRACT

A generic system for evaluating school district management that can be modified and adapted to meet local needs is outlined. To improve school management, the system proposes procedures for an internal school administrative data collection review and improvement committee and an external review and recommendation committee. Guidelines for the internal review begin with a statement of objectives followed by the responsibilities of the chief administrator, the general chairpersons, and department committee chairpersons. The tasks involve identifying individual and committee functions, determining what data are to be collected, the form of the data, and the data recipients. The model for the external review advises those visiting work areas to be sensitive to the staff and then offers general instructions for the subcommittee and admonitions concerning the report format. Summaries of positive findings from an unidentified number of field tests of the model conclude the presentation. (MLF)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED226448

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Gale G. Lennon

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

A GUIDE FOR THE INTERNAL REVIEW OF YOUR SCHOOL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM: A COMPONENT OF THE DISTRICT OFFICE SELF ASSESSMENT AND EXTERNAL REVIEW SYSTEM (DOSAERS)

[and]

A GUIDE FOR THE EXTERNAL REVIEW OF YOUR SCHOOL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM: A COMPONENT OF THE DISTRICT OFFICE SELF ASSESSMENT AND EXTERNAL REVIEW SYSTEM (DOSAERS)

1981

Gale G. Lennon
Merton Johnson

Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of School Administrators (114th, New Orleans, LA, February 26-March 1, 1982).

EA 015 376

A Guide

for the

INTERNAL REVIEW

of your

SCHOOL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM:

A Component of the District Office

Self Assessment and External Review System

(DOSAERS)

© Gale G. Lennon
Merton Johnson
1981

Guidelines for the Internal Review

Some Objectives

1.0 Some objectives of the Internal Management Self Assessment are:

1.1 to specify the multitude of management functions that must be accommodated in the effective management of your school system and to make certain an appropriate person is reponsible for each function.

1.2 to collect and record historical, operational and demographic data in a format that will enable you to make good decisions about the future management of your district

1.3 to analyze the recorded data

1.4 to identify areas of management strength and weakness; and,

1.5 to develop plans recommendations for the further improvement of the management procedures to be used in your district.

*The process is not intended to be an evaluation of the Superintendent or specific staff.

A Decision Must be Made

2.0 Will the proposed review be an internal review only or will it be followed by an external review? Although the internal review procedure will remain the same, participants should know from the beginning if an external review will be conducted. External review purposes and procedures are discussed in a separate publication.

The Procedure

3.0 Once the decision to conduct an internal review has been made, a specific procedure should be followed. Each school district may wish to develop its own. However, the following guidelines may be instructive and can be modified as necessary to accommodate local needs.

Suggested tasks to be completed are:

3.1 For the Chief Administrator

3.11 List the areas of management to be studied.

3.12 Define the role of the Internal Review Committee.

3.13 Develop an Internal Review Committee orientation plan.

3.14 Appoint a General Chairperson if other than the Superintendent.

3.15 Appoint a Team Leader and team members for each area where needed.

3.16 Specify the relationships between/among individuals and/or teams.

3.17 Identify the tasks for each individual and/or committee.

3.18 Determine what data is to be collected for each area.

3.19 Specify how the data is to be reported. The manual, Strategies for the Improvement of School Management: The Internal Review - The External Review is a guide for collecting, reporting and projecting of operational data.

3.20 Set specific timelines for completion.

3.21 Determine and list the uses that will be made of the materials in each area after they have been collected and reported.

3.22 Determine who will receive the data after it is collected/ projected.

3.23 Establish the form of the final report.

3.24 Determine who will compile and prepare the final, composite report.

3.25 Determine who will analyze the collected data by area and who will decide the strengths, weaknesses and recommendations for further improvement for each area.

3.26 Determine who will receive the report listing strengths, weaknesses and recommendations after completion of that section.

3.27 Schedule followup meetings for discussion of the total Internal Review Process to:

3.271 Review and discuss the findings in each area

3.272 Review and discuss the strengths, weaknesses and recommendations in each area

3.273 Develop plans for improvement of the area perceived to need improvement

3.274 Establish a system for monitoring improvement

The mechanics for determining purposes and procedures should be completed before the self study begins.

4.0 The General Chairperson's Responsibilities

4.1 To understand the role and responsibility of the General Chairperson

4.2 In concert with the Chief Administrator, determine which specific management functions will be studied.

4.3 To enable the Committee to understand the management procedures used in the schools, the following should be provided:

4.31 Board policies manuals and administrative handbooks
4.32 A list of all management functions and the person responsible for each function. The attached management functions/responsibility list is a guide.
4.33 The District Philosophy
4.34 Academic (building) level and/or other available philosophies
4.35 District goals and objectives Including EPTF and PER in Minnesota
4.36 Current annual Board/District goals and objectives
4.37 Goal statements at all levels of administration and services delivery for each area
4.38 Job descriptions for the employees in each area
4.39 Any documents specifying responsibility and authority of individual administrators/supervisors in each area
4.40 Evaluation forms and criteria at all levels of employment in the area
4.41 All employee Master Contracts and/or policies for the area
4.42 Fiscal policies and procedures for the area
4.43 Samples of Board agendas
4.44 Samples of Board minutes
4.45 Management Information System (MIS):
1) Business Management
2) Instructional Management
4.46 Regional Accrediting Association Validation Reports and other reviews and audits by building and on a district level as appropriate to the area.

4.5 (S)He should provide a plan for conducting the internal review:

4.51 The plan should specify the tasks and responsibilities of each
4.52 Area Chairperson
4.53 Establish timelines
Schedule plenary sessions of the General Chairperson and the Area Chairperson to discuss each of the Area Commitee's:

4.531 Findings
4.532 Reporting procedures
4.533 Report contents
4.534 Followup procedures

4.54 Receive all area reports after the review.
4.55 Edit each area report
4.56 Have the final, composite report typed and provide it to the specified person/group verbally and/or in written form if this was the agreement with the Chief Administrator.

5.0 The Area or Department Committee Chairperson Should

5.1 Call an Area or Department Committee Meeting
5.2 Specify the tasks for each Committee/Department Member
5.3 Establish timelines
5.4 Monitor progress
5.5 Prepare and submit the area report to the General Chairperson

6.0 For Area Committee Members

As the internal review is about to begin, each Internal Review Committee Member should ask him/herself:

6.1 Have I carefully read and do I understand All materials provided to me?

6.2 Do I understand my responsibilies as a participant in the internal review procedure?

6.3 What can I do to best meet that responsibility?

Any area committee person who is not certain of the answers to the above three questions should discuss the question(s) with his/her area chairperson before beginning the internal review.

Now that everything is organized, YOU ARE READY TO BEGIN THE INTERNAL REVIEW.

WHAT IF AN EXTERNAL REVIEW IS PLANNED?

ALL documents, policies, manuals, handbooks, goals, job descriptions, contracts, projections, agendas, minutes and reports, including the internal review committee's final report for each area, should be accumulated and provided for the External Review Committee. They will review it carefully before arriving on your site. While on your site, they will meet with representatives or the total committee of each area to ask questions pertaining to the above and observe the operation.

Following their meetings with you, they will develop a report listing what they perceive to be the strengths and/or weaknesses of each area. They will also prepare a list of recommendations for each area.

A separate Guide for the External Review of Your School Management System: A Component of the District Office Self Assessment and External Review System will provide more detailed guidance for the External Review.

A Guide

for the

EXTERNAL REVIEW

of your

SCHOOL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM:

A Component of the District Office

Self Assessment and External Review System

(DOSAERS)

External Review - DOSAERS

Superintendent Responsibilities

Task I - Philosophy: Provide a written statement to internal and external staff on the District OFFICE ASSESSMENT and External Review System

Task 2 - Provide a written statement of Goals for External Review Committee

Task 3 - Describe specific roles of visiting External Review Committee if different from guidelines

Task 4 - Develop a detail plan for External Review Committee

a. Select chairperson

b. Plan committee visit with selected chairperson and include:

1. A review of district management philosophy
2. A review of goals for the committee
3. A detail list of management functions and areas to be reviewed
4. Report form and schedule, i.e. verbal and written
5. Select External Review Committee members
6. Contact and confirm willingness to serve by committee with dates established
7. Develop a complete visiting committee agenda

a) Dates and location of visit
b) Materials to be reviewed and when committee members will receive them
c) Orientation and schedule of committee activity
d) Identify staff to support visiting committee, including a coordinator
e) Plan the logistics for visiting committee members including food and lodging
f) Assignment of committee members to draft sections of report
g) Identify who, where and when will type final report

3.4 The chairperson is responsible for organizing the external review committee. The chairperson will plan to organize the committee, and set up the visitation schedule. It is the chairperson's responsibility to make certain that the visit proceeds smoothly and efficiently. The chairperson will orient the committee to procedures and plans and will give specific instructions for the visit.

The chairperson will serve as a liaison between the committee and the organization's personnel, will call sessions of the entire committee to hear and discuss the reports of the various subcommittees and to assess the overall program. After the visit, he or she will compile and edit the total written report.

3.5 Review all of the information that you may be as well informed as possible about the organization, its clients, and the community.

3.6 Review the internal review materials. The self study materials provide information for the external review committee: however, the committee should explore as many aspects as possible in the time that exists.

3.7 Plan your time carefully. Use it for discussion with individuals and groups of employees. The schedule of the visitation should be adapted to fit the requirements of the organization being visited.

3.8 Be sensitive to staff being visited. Many of the staff will be apprehensive about the external review committee visit. You are there to help them, so attempt to reduce apprehensions.

3.9 If you visit work areas, be as inconspicuous and non-disruptive as possible.

3.10 At individual or department review meetings, you and the administrators in the department will have the opportunity to exchange insights, explain procedures, discuss problems and related questions in an open atmosphere. Administrators will identify areas of strength and areas of need within the department. Query and discuss but do not indicate your feelings about the program or organization.

3.11 Be most concerned with the totality of the area you are assessing. Determine how the particular portion of the program is or is not supportive of the purposes and objectives of the organization. Consider how that portion or aspect of the program is meeting the needs of the organization and its clients.

3.12 Avoid being dogmatic. Try to be open-minded about policies and practices that run counter to your personal values. No visiting committee member should come to an organization with predetermined conclusions.

3.13 Consider the resources, both material and personnel, which are available. Are they being used effectively?

3.14 Identify areas where resources or personnel appear insufficient and make recommendations or alternatives, not necessarily additions.

3.15 Seek information in meaningful patterns. Try to determine what the major issues and concerns are. Keep the initiative in your hands by seeking the information you need in order to arrive at some substantial judgment on those matters.

3.16 Ask questions of the staff. When a judgment is ventured by a person from the school, ask him/her to provide an illustration or cite the facts on which he/she has based his/her judgment. Try to determine the why of the person's response.

3.17 Listen carefully throughout the visit. Pay attention, not only in formal meetings, but in informal settings as well.

4.0 Sub-Committee Work:

4.1 While individuals may be assigned specific areas of the report, discuss the organization in all its aspects with your committee colleagues. Their findings and insights frequently may reinforce your own or alter some of your own conclusions. It is a committee report that is sought.

4.2 Discuss your findings, based on individual member's data collection, discussions and analyses. Determine the major strenghths, weaknesses, and recommendations in preparation for writing your sections of the report.

4.3 Avoid duplicating the conclusions and the recommendations of the staff. Only as the recommendations prove valid under the committee's appraisal should the committee incorporate the staff self-study into its own findings.

4.4 Keep in mind that the work of the external review committee is strictly confidential. If the organization has a concern about confidentiality, the effectiveness of the visitation may be in jeopardy.

4.5 Base your conclusions on a firm foundation of facts and collective professional judgment. If there is any doubt in your mind about a statement you are going to include in your report, check it out again.

4.6 Make your conclusions and recommendations realistic. They should rise above the present situation, but not so high as to be considered unattainable. This is particularly important when recommendations are made which require additional money, space, personnel and time.

4.7 Each committee member is responsible for drafting their portion of the final report. The report should represent the consensus of the committee's thinking based upon a great deal of discussion and interaction. In order to provide a thorough, consistent and cohesive report, each committee member should use the same format.

4.8 The conclusions of the visiting committee are made to the chief administrator in the form of a written, narrative report edited by the chairperson. This will include a section for each of the areas reviewed. A brief preliminary oral report may be given at the end of the External Review Committee visit.

5.0 Format of Written Report

5.1 First is the Overview and Assessment section which provides an introduction and overview of that area. It should include a summary of the current situation, summary of the responsibilities of the area, and a brief assessment of the overall quality of the area. It need not be long, but it should leave no doubt as to the degree to which the committee feels this area of the school's program is functioning effectively.

5.2 The Commendations or Strengths section identifies those strengths which hold firm promise for future growth and upon which the department and staff can build in their efforts toward continued improvement. Be willing to make commendations where situations warrant approval and/or praise. Most organizations are doing a good job. That recognition should be reflected in this section.

5.3 The Concerns or Weaknesses section can be the most vital part of the report. It represents your diagnosis of areas that need attention. Avoid small, insignificant items; focus your attention on the major issues involved.

5.4 The recommendations section contains suggestions for correcting weaknesses and for generally enhancing the management of the organization. They need not correspond totally with the weaknesses or limitations but should address themselves to those problems.

5.5 Each report should be consistent throughout. Parallel construction, including proper grammar, should be used. <u>The report should be absolutely error free</u>. An incorrect, error-ridden report is a useless document and represents a waste of everyone's time and effort. Make your comments specific and precise. Try to make your suggestions deal directly with those factors that constitute a high level of management efficiency and effectiveness.

5.6 Be innovative and original when the occasion warrants. While the staff's internal review suggestions are important elements for your consideration, do not accept them uncritically. Exercise independence of judgment.

5.7 In writing the report, you must keep in mind that your purpose is to help the organization and its administrators do a better job. The manner in which a statement is made can make the difference between a rejected portion of the report or a helpful recommendation or idea. Place yourself in the position of receiving each comment and consider how you might react or respond to it. Above all, write in language that the reader will be able to understand.

5.8 The draft of the final report should be shared with the members of the committee and discussed fully. Each committee member should make an oral report to the entire visiting committee during the work session. The purpose of the work session is to discuss each of the reports, raise questions, add additional observations, modify, and then arrive at consensus.

5.9 The involvement by the entire visiting external review committee is essential to insure that the final report is, indeed, a report of the entire committee and not merely a compilation of the individual subcommittee reports. The visiting committee sessions provide them with the necessary information and insight needed to give the exit report to the administrators of the local organization.

5.10 Completed committee reports should be submitted to the chairperson before committee members leave the review site.

ABSTRACT

The Problem

In 1978 it was determined there was no printed generic system or model for the collection of a common body of data that could be reviewed by an Internal School Administrative Committee and by an External Committee for the purpose of improving the school district's organization, its management structure and/or its management procedures. A generic model that could be applied to large or small, urban or rural, independent or paired school districts was needed.

Purposes

The purposes included: 1) to provide a generic system that could enable school administrators to collect relevant demographic data and an informational base of school policies, historical and current management structure, staffing, enrollment, finances, pupil and employee housing, student achievement, course offerings, student transportation, personnel assignments, personnel development and evaluation, compliance, projections of enrollment, finances, student and staff housing needs, academic and administrative organization and other relevant concerns; 2) to propose a system for analyzing the available information; and, 3) to propose a system for strengthening the operation of the school district by specifying and prioritizing the district's current strengths and weaknesses and for developing an improvement plan.

Recommended Procedures

The Superintendent and/or his/her designee(s) should form an Internal Administrative Committee to collect the historical demographic data and information requested plus any additional information deemed to be relevant by the committee. After the data has been analyzed, organizational strengths, weaknesses and improvement plans should be specified and prioritized.

EA 015 376

An External Review Committee of colleagues, peers and knowledgeable others should be formed to review the internal review procedures, the data, the perceived strengths, weaknesses and improvement plans and to validate or to recommend other courses of action and/or other priorities that will more effectively improve the management and improve long and short range planning in the district.

Field Test Results

The Field Test Districts have found: 1) the data requested was easily accessible within the system but had never been centralized; 2) the totality of the available data had never been collected and analyzed for the purpose of developing written, clear, concise, prioritized organizational strengths, weaknesses and plans for improvement and implementation; 3) an Internal Administrative Review Team approach to self analysis had never been used to improve the school district; 4) an External Review of colleagues, peers, and knowledgeable others had never been used to improve the school district; 5) a majority of the school administrators in the Field Test Districts were unclear regarding their line/staff relationships, their responsibilities, the parameters of their authority, their evaluation criteria and the results of their evaluations; and, 6) some middle administrators were responsible to no one in the organization.

In addition, some Field Test Districts used the system to substantiate the need to close underused buildings, to modify staff assignments, to modify student transportation routes, to adjust use of facilities to better meet administrative and other needs, to revise internal communication channels, to realign staff and/or curriculum development emphasis and to adjust financial allocations to support specific priorities. Two non-field test districts used the system to consolidate the separate data bases in the two districts and to establish a new, consolidated, paired school organization.

Conclusions

The system applies to a wide variety of school districts sizes and locations. Its generic properties permit its modification and adaptation to meet local needs. It was the first system known to propose use of an internal school administrative data collection, review and improvement committee procedure and an external review, validation/recommendation committee procedure to improve school management. The School Administrators who have field tested or used the District Office Self Assessment and External Review System report that it was a very helpful management improvement tool.